

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 642

By Gilmore

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

WHEREAS, on July 20, 1969, the world watched with rapt attention as the Apollo 11 lunar module touched down on the Sea of Tranquility; and

WHEREAS, the Apollo 11 moon landing was the culmination of the Space Race and fulfilled the words of President John F. Kennedy, who, in a joint session of Congress in 1961, said that the nation should commit itself to the goal of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth "before this decade is out"; and

WHEREAS, the Apollo program built on the successes of the newly formed National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), whose Project Mercury and Project Gemini space missions successfully carried one and two astronauts, respectively, into Earth's orbit; and

WHEREAS, much was also learned from the tragic Apollo 1 mission, whose astronauts, Command Pilot Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, Senior Pilot Edward H. White II, and Pilot Roger B. Chaffee, were killed in a cabin fire during a launch rehearsal test on January 27, 1967; in the aftermath, the command module underwent a number of design changes, and the Apollo program resumed with Apollo 4 in November 1967, with all subsequent flights numbered sequentially in the order flown; and

WHEREAS, for the Apollo 11 mission, NASA selected Commander Neil A. Armstrong, Command Module Pilot Michael Collins, and Lunar Module Pilot Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr., as its crew members; they relied on the collective efforts of thousands of employees, scientists, engineers, and contractors, as well as "human computers," mathematicians in the computer pool at NASA, whose trajectory calculations were critical to the success of the mission; and

WHEREAS, the three astronauts launched into space aboard the Saturn V rocket from the NASA Launch Operations Center, now known as the John F. Kennedy Space Center, on July 16, 1969; an estimated one million spectators watched from the highways and beaches in the vicinity of Launch Complex 39A, while another twenty-five million viewers in the United States watched on television. The launch was also televised live in thirty-three countries and broadcast worldwide on the radio; and

WHEREAS, the Apollo 11 crew traveled in space for three days before entering lunar orbit; at this time, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin moved into the lunar module, Eagle, and landed on the Sea of Tranquility while Michael Collins flew the command module, Columbia, alone in lunar orbit; and

WHEREAS, while Buzz Aldrin called out navigation data, Neil Armstrong piloted Eagle as it descended to the moon; with fuel running low, he landed the lunar module on the Sea of Tranquility and announced for the world to hear, "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed"; and

WHEREAS, more than six hours later, Neil Armstrong stepped down onto the surface of the moon with the words, "That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind"; upon joining him a few minutes later, Buzz Aldrin described the view as "magnificent desolation"; and

WHEREAS, the astronauts then planted the lunar flag assembly, an American flag with specialized poles designed to be placed on the moon, and received a telephone-radio transmission from President Richard Nixon at the White House; they continued their work on the moon's surface by taking photos, collecting rock and soil samples, and deploying the Apollo Lunar Surface Experiments Package, which included the Lunar Laser Ranging Retroreflector; and

WHEREAS, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin also left behind a plaque mounted on the descent stage of the Eagle with the inscription, "Here men from the planet Earth first set upon the Moon July 1969, A.D. We came in peace for all mankind.", and an Apollo 11 mission patch

on the moon's surface in honor of Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee, the first crewed Apollo Saturn flight; and

WHEREAS, after more than twenty-one hours at Tranquility Base, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin lifted off from the surface of the moon to rejoin Michael Collins aboard Columbia; the three astronauts returned to Earth on July 24, 1969, splashing down into the Pacific Ocean; and

WHEREAS, following a mandatory three-week quarantine, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins were honored in ticker-tape parades in New York, New York, and Chicago, Illinois, and each man received the Presidential Medal of Freedom; they also spoke before a joint session of Congress on September 16, 1969, and later embarked on a thirty-eight-day world tour of twenty-two foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, fifty years later, the Apollo 11 moon landing continues to inspire national scientific efforts in space, medicine, and other fields, and the Lunar Laser Ranging Retroreflector still provides fresh data for scientists; and

WHEREAS, the Apollo program sent man to the moon and served as a precursor to the Space Shuttle program and the creation of the International Space Station, and the spirit of space exploration still exists in the hearts and minds of Americans today; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we join with all Americans in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing as we reflect on the past, present, and future of space exploration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.